

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 DHA-02 IO-13 TRSE-00 /080 W

-----280928Z 083605 /11

R 280806Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5398

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MANILA 1420

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, RP

SUBJECT: STATUS OF MINDANAO CEASEFIRE

REF: MANILA 1095

1. SUMMARY. GOP HAS ANNOUNCED AGREEMENT WITH MNLF FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF MINDANAO CEASEFIRE, INCLUDING AMNESTY, RELEASE OF PRISONERS, AND CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES (BUT REBELS ARE NOT BEING ASKED TO TURN IN GUNS). LATEST INFORMATION INDICATES TRUCE TEAMS HAVE MADE CONTACT WITH SENIOR COTABATO REBEL LEADERS WHO AGREED TO OBSERVE CEASEFIRE. MAJOR REBEL GROUPS ARE ALSO OBSERVING CEASE-FIRE ON JOLO ISLAND. CONTRARY TO EARLIER INDICATIONS, GOP HAS APPARENTLY DECIDED NOT OPENLY TO SUPPORT RETURNEE ORGANIZATION (MRLM) AS POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE TO MNLF. RECENT CEASEFIRE DEVELOPMENTS ARE ENCOURAGING BUT FAR FROM CONSLUSIVE. END SUMMARY.

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2. GOP RELEASED DETAILS OF CEASEFIRE IMPLEMENTING AGREEMENT, SIGNED BY ADMIRAL ESPALDON AND MNLF TRUCE TEAM LEADER MANJOORSA, ON JANUARY 22. TEXT NOT YET AVAILABLE. ACCORDING PRESS ACCOUNTS AGREEMENT PROVIDES FOR AMNESTY AND RELEASE OF PRISONERS (BUT NOT THOSE QUILTY OF MURDER, PIRACY, HIJACKING, KIDNAPPING, ETC.); CESSATION OF HOSTILI-

TIES (EXCEPTING GOVERNMENT LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES AND DEFENSE OF INSTALLATIONS AGAINST ATTACK.) IN ACCORDANCE WITH EXISTING LAWS, FIREARMS ARE NOT TO BE CARRIED EXCEPT BY GOVERNMENT FORCES IN PERFORMANCE OF DUTIES. HOWEVER, PRESS ACCOUNTS MAKE CLEAR THAT HARD-CORE REBELS HAVE NOT REPEAT NOT BEEN ASKED TO TURN IN WEAPONS. MOVEMENT OF MNLF FORCES AND SUPPLIES IS ALLOWED EXCEPT FIREARMS, AMMUNITION, AND OTHER WAR MATERIALS. (COMMENT: GENERAL MENZIE OF BULLETIN TODAY TOLD AMBASSADOR JANUARY 27 THAT MARCOS IS STILL TINKERING WITH CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT INDICATING THAT VERSION DESCRIBED IN PRESS NOT FINAL. END COMMENT.)

3. RETURNEES (MLRM). GOP NO LONGER APPEARS TO BE BUILDING UP REBEL SURRENDEREES (SO-CALLED MORO REFORM LIBERATION MOVEMENT) AS POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE TO MNLF. JANUARY 19 REMARKS BY ISLAMIC CONFERENCE DELEGATION LEADER KASEM ZAHERI REJECTING MLRM REQUEST FOR SEAT AT TRIPOLI CONFERENCE AND ASSERTING THAT IC RECOGNIZES ONLY MNLF WERE REPORTED ON FRONT PAGE OF TIMES JOURNAL. AFTER SOME-TIMES HEATED DISCUSSION, DEF UNDERSEC BARBERO REACHED "FIVE POINT AGREEMENT" WITH MLRM LEADERS IN ZAMBOANGA ON JANUARY 20 IN WHICH THEY AGREED TO SUPPORT CEASE-FIRE AND ENDORSED CONCEPT OF TWO-PART AUTONOMOUS REGION (IX AND XII). ACCORDING GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL PRESENT, RETURNEES FEARED MOST OF ALL THEY WOULD LOSE THEIR JOBS IN EXISTING REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIONS, AND THEY HAVE BEEN AT LEAST PARTIALLY REASSURED.

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4. SITUATION BY SECTOR. NO MAJOR CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS HAVE BEEN REPORTED SINCE JANUARY 20, BUT SOME SMALL SCALE SHOOTINGS. SITUATION BY SECTOR AS FOLLOWS:

(A) BASILAN/SULU. ACCORDING RECENT VISITOR, ADMIRAL ESPALDON IS "JUBILANT" ABOUT SITUATION ON JOLO, WHERE MAJOR REBEL GROUPS UNDER BIAN LAY LIM AND OTHER TOP COMMANDERS ARE OBSERVING CEASEFIRE. PRESS ALSO REPORTS REBEL GROUPS UNDER GERRY SALIPUDDIN AND OTHERS ON BASILAN OBSERVING CEASEFIRE, BUT OVERALL SITUATION THERE UNCERTAIN. TAWI-TAWI HAS ALREADY BEEN QUIET FOR SOME MONTHS.

(B) ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR. AUSTRALIAN DCM SAYS SITUATION AROUND PAGADIAN (SITE OF AUSTRALIAN AID PROJECT) QUIET BUT TENSE WITH ONLY FEW MINOR VIOLATIONS SINCE JANUARY 20 AND REBEL ACTIVITIES CONFINED MAINLY TO ROUTINE EXTORTION. (HOWEVER, ACCORDING LATEST PRESS, PAGADIAN BOUND BUS AMBUSHED JANUARY 27 WITH TWO KILLED.)

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CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MANILA 1420

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

(C) COTABATO. ACCORDING JANUARY 27 PRESS REPORTS, MNLF TRUCE TEAM UNDER MANJOORSA MET FOR FIRST TIME WITH FIFTEEN MAGUINDANAO REBEL LEADERS AND 2,000 GUERRILLAS UNDER IBRAHIM AHAD (COMMANDER MURAD), WHO IS PROBABLE MNLF CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER, AND AMERIL "RONNIE" MALGIOK, CHAIRMAN OF MNLF'S COTABATO REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE. REBELS PLEDGED TO OBSERVE CEASEFIRE. (GENERAL RAMOS CONFIRMED TO AMBASSADOR THAT CONTACT WITH REBELS ESTABLISHED IN COTABATO.) COMMENT: THIS DEVELOPMENT MAY BE HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT. COTABATO IS OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE AND AHAD AND MALGIOK ARE SENIOR LEADERS OF WELL-DISCIPLINED LOCAL REBEL MOVEMENT. END COMMENT.

(D) LANA O. AS USUAL SITUATION IN FACTION-RIDDEN LANA O, WHERE CENTRAL MNLF INFLUENCE IS WEAKEST, IS UNCLEAR. THERE HAS REPORTEDLY BEEN RELATIVELY LITTLE VIOLENCE FOR SOME WEEKS. TRUCE

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TEAMS HAVE VISITED AREA BUT NOT YET CONTACTED MAJOR
"REBEGHZ LEADERS.

5. REHABILITATION. MANILA PRESS HAS GONE OVERBOARD
DESCRIBING NEW ERA OF PEACE AND REHABILITATION. DEPART-
MENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE ANNOUNCED RELEASE OF P 22 MILLION
IN LOANS, ETC., FOR RETURNEES AND EVACUEES, AND ESPALDON
TOLD MUSLIMS IN ZAMBOANGA ON JANUARY 25 THAT EVERY
GRADUATE OF HIS RETURNE TRAINING PROGRAM WOULD BE
HIRED BY ONE OF FOUR FILIPINO FIRMS OPERATING IN MIDDLE
EAST AT MINIMUM SALARY OF \$325 PER MONTH.

COMMENT: IMPLEMENTATION OF CEASEFIRE HAS BEEN SUCCESS-
FUL THUS FAR IN SULU, AND LATEST NEWS FROM COTABATO IS
ENCOURAGING. GOP'S APPARENT DOWNPLAYING OF MLRM IS
ALSO A GOOD SIGN. END COMMENT.

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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SAS ID: 3677998
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Status: NATIVE
Subject: STATUS OF MINDANAO CEASEFIRE
TAGS: PINS, RP, MNLF
To: STATE
Type: TE
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